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DOCKET: 2003505 US; MB-104  
APPLICATION: 10/821,383IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICEIn Re Application of:  
Christopher H. PorterExaminer : Christopher Koharski  
Art Unit: 3763

Applic.: 10/821,383

Filed: 04/09/2004

For: PERCUTANEOUSLY IMPLANTABLE  
MEDICAL DEVICE CONFIGURED TO  
PROMOTE TISSUE INGROWTHAmendment Responsive  
to Office Action  
dated 08/21/2008Commissioner for Patents  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450REMARKS

The Office Action dated 08/21/2008 has been carefully considered. It is noted that the prior final rejection has been withdrawn "in view of new prior art", that claims 1, 3 16 and 18-21 are currently pending, and that claims 10-12 have been withdrawn. It is further noted that claims 1, 3-9, 13-16, and 18-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over (1) Poirier (US 4,668,222) in view of de Groot (EP 0367354) and (2) Thramann (US 5,360,448) in view of de Groot. As a consequence of the new grounds of rejection, independent claims 1 and 16 are being canceled in favor of newly drafted independent claims 22 and 23, respectively. The current claim amendments are set forth with particularity in the attached Claim Listing. Note that the cancellation of claim 9 obviates the objection to the Specification.

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MRPB844.RESPONSE TO OA 506

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1 The present invention is directed to a medical device 30 configured for implantation  
2 in a patient's soft tissue, e.g., in a patient's retro-auricular space 28. As discussed on  
3 page 4 of the Specification, it is intended to implant the device 30 in a recess 32 by  
4 surgically tunneling through space 28. Accordingly, the device 30 in accordance with the  
5 invention is configured with a lateral profile particularly suited to be longitudinally advanced  
6 through a surgically formed tunnel.  
7

8 The device 30 is comprised of a housing body 42 having a lateral shoulder 60 and a  
9 stud 62 extending longitudinally from the shoulder. The longitudinal peripheral surface of  
10 the stud carries a longitudinal porous layer 30 for promoting soft tissue ingrowth.  
11 Additionally, the lateral surface of shoulder 60 carries a lateral porous layer which extends  
12 orthogonal to and abuts the longitudinal porous layer. The orthogonal porous layers  
13 function together to promote soft tissue ingrowth, promote vascularization and form an  
14 infection resistant barrier while also providing enhanced anchoring.  
15

16 To enable the device 30 to be implanted by surgical tunneling, the housing body 42  
17 defines a substantially uniform lateral dimension (see, e.g., Figures 5, 7, 12, 13A-C) and  
18 the lateral and longitudinal porous layers define lateral dimensions equal to or less than  
19 the housing body lateral dimension. This structural configuration allows the device 30 to  
20 be longitudinally advanced through a small surgically formed tunnel to subcutaneously  
21 implant the housing body 42 and percutaneously implant the projecting stud 62.  
22

23 The Office Action initially rejects independent claims 1 and 16 (now cancelled in  
24 favor of new claims 22 and 23) under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over newly cited  
25 Poirier in view of de Groot. Both of these references show percutaneously implantable  
26 access devices each having a flange or skirt carrying porous material useful for  
27 subcutaneous anchoring. In each case, the flange extends laterally beyond the lateral  
28

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MRPB344.RESPONSE TO OA 505

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1 dimension of the device body. Thus, neither of these references suggest a device  
2 construction suitable for implantation via surgical tunneling as contemplated by the present  
3 invention.

4 More particularly, note that Poirier describes multiple embodiments each including a  
5 flange or flat skirt, e.g., 22, 62, for subdermal anchoring. Further note that the Poirier  
6 flange has a lateral dimension, or diameter which is considerably larger than the lateral  
7 dimension of his device body. As a consequence, Poirier fails to suggest a device suited  
8 for implantation by surgical tunnelling. Rather, the Poirier device requires a relatively large  
9 surgical incision to allow the device flange to be inserted therethrough for subcutaneous  
10 implantation. The requirement to form a large incision, as contrasted with surgical  
11 tunneling, results in greater patient tissue damage, increased patient discomfort, and  
12 longer healing time.  
13

14  
15 The de Groot reference also teaches the use of a subdermal flange 2 for anchoring.  
16 As is apparent from de Groot's disclosure, his flange 2 has a much larger lateral dimension  
17 than the de Groot implant 10. Accordingly de Groot fails to suggest a device construction  
18 suited for implantation by longitudinally advancing the device through a surgically formed  
19 tunnel.  
20

21 Applicant's new independent apparatus claim 22 has been carefully drafted to recite  
22 the distinguishing characteristics of embodiments of the invention which render them  
23 suitable for implantation by surgical tunneling and which afford the benefits identified in  
24 Applicant's Specification, i.e., promoting soft tissue ingrowth and vascularization, and  
25 forming an infection resistant barrier. Thus, claim 22 recites that the housing body has a  
26 substantially uniform lateral dimension and that the longitudinally and laterally extending  
27 porous layers abut one another and have lateral dimensions which are no greater than the  
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MRPB344.RESPONSE TO OA 606

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1 housing body lateral dimension. These limitations structurally distinguish claim 22 over the  
2 Poirier and de Groot teachings and afford significant functional advantages over the cited  
3 prior art. Accordingly, favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

4 Applicant's new independent method claim 23 has been similarly drafted to define a  
5 method of "configuring a medical device for implantation by surgical tunneling". Claim 23  
6 recites providing a housing body defining a "substantially uniform lateral dimension" and  
7 forming a longitudinal porous layer "having a lateral dimension no greater than said  
8 housing body lateral dimension" and forming a lateral porous layer "having a lateral  
9 dimension no greater than said housing body lateral dimension". Further, claim 23 recites  
10 that the lateral porous layer is positioned to abut the longitudinal porous layer. It is  
11 accordingly urged that claim 23 thus patentably distinguishes over the Poirier and de Groot  
12 teachings and favorable consideration is requested.

13  
14 The Office Action also rejects independent claims 1 and 16 (now canceled in favor  
15 of new claims 22 and 23) under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over newly cited Thramann  
16 view of de Groot. Thramann discloses a bone screw having a shaft including  
17 "longitudinally extending regions, one or more of which have bone ingrowth porous  
18 surfaces and alternate with regions having threaded surfaces."

19  
20 The Office Action recognizes that Thramann fails to teach Applicant's pore size and  
21 porosity limitations (recited in claims 22 and 23) but contends that "it would have been  
22 obvious to use the porous materials of de Groot with the system of Thramann ". With due  
23 respect to the examiner's contention, it is nevertheless urged that the proposed  
24 combination of references is not well taken. Thramann is solely concerned with long term  
25 "fixation of the screw to the bone " whereas de Groot is concerned with anchoring in "soft  
26 tissue", "when no boney tissue is present". The respective references address very  
27  
28

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MRPB344, RESPONSE TO OA 505

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1 different problems and propose distinct solutions. It appears that nothing, other than  
2 perhaps Applicant's disclosure, would prompt a combination of the Thramann and de  
3 Groot teachings. And, it is respectfully urged, that reliance on Applicant's disclosure  
4 represents the application of impermissible hindsight reasoning. As noted in MPEP 2142,  
5 "impermissible hindsight must be avoided and the legal conclusion must be reached on the  
6 facts gleaned from the prior art".  
7

8 In any event, assuming arguendo that the combination of Thramann and de Groot  
9 was appropriate, nevertheless they fail to suggest the invention recited in claims 22 and  
10 23. Note particularly that claim 22 recites orthogonal longitudinally and laterally extending  
11 porous layers positioned to abut one another, as clearly depicted in Applicant's drawings  
12 (e.g., Figures 5, 7, 8, 12). These limitations clearly structurally distinguish claim 22 over  
13 the cited art and yield the benefits stressed in the specification of promoting soft tissue  
14 ingrowth and vascularization, forming an infection resistant barrier, and providing  
15 enhanced anchoring.  
16

17 Method claim 23 similarly distinguishes over the cited art by reciting that the lateral  
18 porous surface is positioned to orthogonally abut the longitudinal porous surface.  
19

20 In view of the foregoing, it is urged that independent claims 22 and 23 patentably  
21 distinguish the present invention over the cited prior art and favorable consideration of  
22 these claims, along with remaining dependent claims 3-8 and 18-21, is courteously  
23 requested.  
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Respectfully submitted,



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